

THE QUAVER,

WITH WHICH IS PUBLISHED "CHORAL HARMONY,"

A monthly Advocate of Popular Musical Education,
And Exponent of the Letter-note Method.

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Prelude.

THERE are several ways of commencing a musical sound. It is possible to begin *ff*, and, after a gradual *diminuendo*, die away *pp*. It is also practicable to start quietly, and then swell the sound to the full power of the voice or instrument.

In commencing THE QUAVER, the latter mode is considered preferable. It begins small—it starts *solo voce*—but if the sustaining power of the performers proves sufficient, and the endurance of the auditory is not over-taxed, possibly it may, at a future time, increase in volume.

But, inasmuch as a wise composer never introduces into his score a single note without some definite purpose—not even one the size of the smallest hemi-demi-semi-quaver yet discovered—in like manner the first QUAAVER must be struck with no uncertain sound, and must show clearly why it is where it is.

The heading explains its object to some extent, and a few concise words will suffice to explain the nature of the publication. The chief object of the work is an educational one. It desires to help on, as far as lays in its power, the cause of Popular Musical Education. It wishes to see Music taught as one of the regular branches of education in every seminary. It aims at making Music a familiar thing in every household. It seeks to render the Music of every congregation of Christian worshippers as beautiful externally, as it is sincere internally. It is searching for the most direct and certain mode of accomplishing these objects.

In musical politics it is liberal-conservative. The title chosen for the work shows that it wishes to conserve the stave and notes of the ordinary musical notation, considering them too good to be lightly thrown away. On the other hand, its connection with Letter-note proves that it is liberal enough to promote innovation, if, thereby,

an improvement is likely to be effected.

It is a *quaiver*, however, not a *crotchet*. As such, it is anxious—most anxious—to disclaim all connection with the numerous abortive schemes for the amelioration of the human race with which this other branch of the Black family has been associated. The quaver has always filled an honourable and useful position in musical literature, and has performed the work allotted to it without the fussiness of the demi-semi, on the one hand, or the ponderous tread of the White family of notes, on the other. An exceedingly cheerful note in quick movements, it can, under different circumstances, conduct itself demurely enough to find a place even in the grave strains of church music.

As a journal, therefore, THE QUAAVER, while desirous of making progress, will not ride the Letter-note hobby to death. It is quite aware that there are various ways of teaching music, and also numerous persons, differing in age and mental capacity, waiting to be taught. Therefore, while it has an opinion of its own, and advocates a particular method of instruction in which it has faith, it can also find room for a word in favour of its co-workers in the same field of labour.

THE QUAAVER's sincere desire is to secure a thorough and impartial examination of a whole series of questions respecting musical notation, methods of instruction, and the use of music, whether vocal or instrumental, choir or congregational, school or domestic. Without distinction of musical creed or party, it will willingly receive contributions and suggestions bearing upon these, or any other subject connected with that of Popular Musical Education. It will also most gladly give publicity to every proposed innovation which is likely to prove of service to the cause which it advocates. All it asks, either for itself or for others, is that the best method of instruction, let its name or its notation be what it may, shall win the suffrages of the public.



First Steps in Musical Composition.

 In this course of lessons it is intended to take up the subject from a point which the pupil, it is presumed, has already reached in the course of his studies. He is supposed to possess some acquaintance with the symbols employed in music, and to have the power of singing or playing the sounds indicated. Letter-note pupils who have faithfully worked out either of the courses, and such as through other methods of instruction have a practical knowledge of the rudiments of music, will probably experience no difficulty in following these lessons. In cases where such instruments as a piano, harmonium, or organ are not accessible for the purpose of study, pupils can easily form themselves into little clubs of four members or upwards. These little clubs or choirs, meeting periodically and singing the examples and exercises, would soon attain a practical acquaintance with the effects of chords and harmonic phrases. The work of the class will be carried on by means of written exercises forwarded per post for correction. But, before proceeding with the lessons, it may be expedient to glance briefly at the subjects which our course of study comprises:—

1. A succession of musical sounds constitutes the element in music which we term, "Melody."
2. Two or more musical sounds, sung or played together, form a *chord*; and a succession of chords, whether concords or discords, together with the laws regulating their use, constitute another branch of musical study termed, "Harmony."
3. The relation which melody and harmony hold to each other is, in many respects, analogous to that of form and colour in a sister art. We can study form without reference to colour: we can also treat of melody apart from harmony. On the other hand, we can speak of the effect of colour distinct from form; and, in like manner, it is possible to deal with harmony independent of melody. Colour, however, includes form of some kind: harmony presupposes melody; for, in order to create harmony, there must be a *succession* of chords, and the motion of the parts thus engenders a kind of melody of which cognizance must be taken even when studying harmony alone.
4. The term *thorough bass* is another name for harmony. Thorough bass was a mode of noting music in which only the bass was written, and the accompanying chords were indicated by means of certain figures placed over the notes of the bass. At a former period this was the mode of writing all organ music, and the performer's skill was shown by the way in which he distributed the sounds of the chords so as to produce singable parts. As the ability to play thorough bass necessitated a knowledge of the rules of harmony, the two terms became almost synonymous; and, although this mode of writing music has gone out of fashion, the thorough bass figures are still used as names for the chords which they represented.

5. A third branch of musical science, treating of melody and harmony combined, is termed, "Counterpoint." Besides the plainer forms of composition, it includes various others, such as—*Canon*, in which the parts chase each other through the same melody, or one an octave, fourth, or fifth higher or lower—*Imitation*, where a certain degree of resemblance is preserved between the parts—and *Fugue*, a more strict kind of imitation in which the parts are arranged in accordance with established rules.

6. These, especially the last two, are, among others, distinctive features of high-class music. In the ordinary style of composition a tune bluntly repeats itself over and over, with or without variation. But few melodies will bear frequent repetition without becoming tedious, and the resources of such music are, therefore, limited. It is, so to speak, the work of a journeyman. But the *master*, availing himself of these devices of counterpoint, is able to work up a short melody into a ponderous chorus, leaving it at the last almost as fresh as it was at the commencement. This he is able to accomplish by virtue of the marvellous musical ingenuity with which the Great Master has endowed him, working through the forms of composition just explained.

7. In writing a fugue the composer first invents a *subject* or *theme*—a phrase, or short melody, a few measures in length. He gives it, we will say, to the bass to start with. Next, we shall suppose, the tenor sings the *answer*, *i.e.* the same phrase transposed a fifth higher, with such alterations as will cause the *sol* in the tenor to correspond to the *do* in the bass. The bass, meanwhile, sings an accompaniment to the tenor. Next, the alto repeats what the bass has just sung: the treble likewise complements the

tenor, and sings the answer. The other parts harmoniously decorate both the subject and answer in such ingenious ways as the fancy of the composer suggests. Then, possibly the composer gives the subject to the tenor and the answer to the alto; the subject to the treble and the answer to the bass. Thus, by continually varying the voices, by setting the subject and answer in different octaves, and by a thousand ingenious ways, the fugue is developed. Then, frequently, there is a counter-subject, and another fugue upon it—a fugue answering to a fugue. This, together with little choral episodes, connecting one portion with the other, multiplies the subject four, eight, sixteen, or any number of times; and the result in the hands of a Haydn or a Handel is a chorus of stupendous power, transcendent beauty, and tireless variety.

[Continued in our next.]

LETTER-NOTE.

ABOUT twelve years ago two teachers of music, desirous of finding some mode of printing the ordinary notation which would clearly show the key-relationship of every note, hit upon the expedient of *lettered notes*. The idea of appending to notes the initials of the sol-fa syllables, so always representing the key-tone, was not a novel one: for years it had been customary with teachers thus to letter their pupils' music. Music printed thus was, however, considered a new thing; and the idea was honestly worked out as original. But, finding that similar music had been printed in the year 1594, the fact was duly acknowledged by its authors in the preface to the "Graduated Course," published in 1863. Music thus printed was christened "Letter-note," and the "Graduated Course" was the first, and at that time the only, specimen extant.

The end aimed at in the publication of Letter-note was simply to make it introductory to the ordinary notation: its authors, therefore, laid down the following rules for themselves in carrying out the idea:

That the musical symbols employed should be a *far simile* of those in general use. Thus the pupil, when proceeding to the study of the ordinary notes, would have nothing to unlearn, and everything connected with the mode of noting *timi* already learned.

That, in order to publish at the smallest possible price, the expense of preparing founts of type specially for the purpose should be avoided, and only the ordinary music type be employed.

That, in order to accustom the pupil to singing without such assistance, the letters should be gradually withdrawn until at last they entirely disappeared.

These principles were faithfully carried out in the "Graduated Course," and, if the need of encouragement awarded it up to the present time be any criterion, it has been a successful book, and helped to increase the number of ordinary notation readers.

A subsequent work—"The Letter-note Singing Method"—follows a similar arrangement of lessons, but the notes are lettered throughout. Like its predecessor, it is a complete introduction to the ordinary notation, as ample directions and exercises are given for teaching how to dispense with the letters. But practically this point gives no trouble whatever; in fact the more enthusiastic pupils do it of their own accord, desiring to test their newly-acquired powers.

These works are more specially adapted for teaching adults. Teachers will use either the one or the other in accordance with the requirements of their pupils. "The Junior Course," now being published, is intended for the use of school and junior pupils. The three works are at present the training-books of the method: music for practice is published in certain of the numbers of "Choral Harmony," also in

"The Treasury Hymnal," "Children's Harmonist," and other works.

To the teachers who have so faithfully and successfully used Letter-note; to its publishers who from the first have interested themselves in its welfare; and also to the writers in the public press who gave it ready commendation; the most cordial thanks are respectfully tendered.

That the principle of lettered notes is a sound one is shown by the fact that since Letter-note was first brought before the public, other and similar methods have appeared. These, although identical in principle, differ in some matters of detail, and chiefly as regards the position of the letter. In this, however, Letter-note possesses a peculiar advantage; for the position of the letter is so used as to become an aid in the work of teaching. Thus:—Letter-note music intended to be sung by female voices has the letters placed *above* the notes; that for male voices, *underneath*; except in "short score" music, the clefs in which designate clearly the respective voices. Thus every page, or even fragment, of such music shows plainly whether it is composed for a male, a female, or a mixed choir. Again, when an accidental occurs in the music, the position of the letter is made to aid the learner. In the case of a sharpened note the letter is shifted to the right, and in that of a flattened one it appears to the left; and as this rule is *invariably observed*, let the symbols of elevation or depression used in the music be what they may, it at once clears away all the little ambiguities which so much perplex beginners owing to the mode of using such in the ordinary notation. The thing signified is made plain, and the whole energy of the pupil is then employed in carrying it into practical effect.

[An apparent exception to this rule occurs when, for the assistance of the singer, the sol-fa is altered to the new key. The exception is *apparent* only, not real: the change in the sol-fa has caused certain accidental notes to express *natural sounds in the new key*, and they are, therefore, lettered as such. A case in point appears at the end of page 63 of the music published with this sheet.]

For Letter-note the following advantages are claimed:—

AS AN INTRODUCTORY NOTATION
It is identical with the notation to be introduced. Every symbol is used in its integrity, and the pupil when proceeding to the ordinary notation merely requires to be taught how to dispense with the letters.

Whilst it secures all the advantages of the Tonic principle, it also effectually removes the difficulty caused by the fact that the position of the key-tone varies; a difficulty which besets the learner most when he is weakest,—viz., at the commencement of his studies.

It clears away difficulties arising out of *notations* merely, and shirks none inherent in the study of

music itself.

It smooths the progress of the pupil by a careful graduation in the lessons; only one new thing is taught at a time, and once introduced it is kept prominently in view until mastered.

AS AN INDEPENDENT NOTATION

It enables pupils who have passed through an elementary course of lessons to accomplish a higher class of music than they could attempt without its aid. It, consequently, opens up a wider and more interesting range of study; cultivates a taste for good music; and entices beginners to proceed further.

It simplifies the mode of noting *time*. Such times as three-eight, three-two, two-two or alla breve, are never used in Letter-note; the first two of these are always written in three-four time, and the others in two-four or four-four; and thus in all simple times the beat is invariably represented by the crotchet.

It puts singers and instrumentalists on an equal footing, rendering the music as easy to the former as it already is to the latter.

It is economical: it combines in one publication the advantages of two separate works in different notations, entails no outlay for specially prepared founts of type, and can be printed as cheaply as the cheapest.

Either as introductory or independent, therefore, Letter-note commends itself for the purpose of teaching to sing at sight.

The greater part of the Letter-note music already published is in vocal score, with or without separate accompaniment. The music in this number contains a specimen of *short score* music, a mode of writing very suitable for simple tunes, as it saves space, and the pianist is able to play from it. Probably Letter-note pupils will not in the least object to the multiplicity of symbols involved in lettered short score, and the fact that the tenor is printed in the bass clef will not, in Letter-note music, cause them the least trouble, even although they should be wholly unaccustomed to singing from this clef.

But to the instrumentalist, and to singers upon other than the Tonic principle, letters are useless, and it is freely admitted that the introduction of so many additional symbols will only tend to diminish

the legibility of the music to those performers who do not use them. But, inasmuch as short score presents the advantage of economy, the question has arisen whether it is possible, by a slight alteration in the mode of lettering, to render short score Letter-note as legible to the pianist as the ordinary music. With this object in view a new mode of lettering has been attempted. It is termed

LETTER-NOTE No 2.

A specimen is given underneath. It is in some respects similar to the notation published by Mr. Brechin; but differs entirely in the fact that it is a lettered note. Instrumentalists will oblige by stating whether, making due allowance for its unusual appearance, they could play comfortably from such Letter-note. If this point is settled, no trouble whatever will be caused with regard to notes of different values.

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MR. JOHN ADLEY, teacher of the Letter-note and Tonic Sol-fa Methods, 5, Bruce Terrace, The Park, Tottenham, London, N. Mr. Adley visits Surbiton, Kingston, Richmond, St. John's Wood, Norwood, Blackheath, &c., for giving instruction in singing.

THE QUAKER is published on the 1st of every month. Price One Penny, inclusive of four pages, or upwards, of music printed either in Letter-note or the ordinary notation. Next month's number will contain the commencement of an article on Musical Notation.

Specimen of Letter-note No 2

Lift up to God the voice of praise Whose breath our souls inspir'd;

Loud and more loud the anthem raise With grate-ful ar-dour fir'd.

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